MADERA
IRRIGATION
DISTRICT

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September 25, 1998

The Honorable George P. Radanovich
United States House of Representatives
213 Cannon Building
Washington, D.C.   20515

Dear George,

Re: Madera Ranch Groundwater Bank Land Purchase

This letter is intended to clarify the Madera Irrigation District (MID) position regarding a potential Madera Ranch Groundwater bank and to notify you of a recent change in District policy. The District is not opposed in principle to a groundwater bank in Madera County. We strongly encourage studies and investigations of additional surface and groundwater storage in the State of California because we see that as being critical to the future of our own water supply as well as that of the entire state.

However, Madera Irrigation District is concerned about the process and timing of federal actions regarding the purchase of lands for a potential Madera Ranch groundwater banking project. In a recent meeting between the Bureau of Reclamation and representatives of MID and other local water agencies, we expressed our concerns about the lack of adequate feasibility studies. Although Roger Patterson acknowledged the need for those studies prior to making a decision about a groundwater bank, the Bureau still appears to be making representations and supporting funding actions that presume a groundwater bank is feasible.

It has also been represented by the Bureau and others that the purchase of the lands should go forward in advance of the feasibility study because of the likelihood that the land may not be available for purchase a year from now if a feasibility study concluded that a groundwater bank was feasible. The District is not convinced of that urgency and, in fact, views the purchase of that land in advance of a completed feasibility study as an action which could prejudice future decisions regarding whether or not to construct a groundwater bank.

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Hon. George Radanovich
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Therefore, at a Special Board Meeting yesterday, the Madera Irrigation District Board of Directors took an action to oppose the purchase of any land in Madera County, by or in cooperation with any state or federal agency, that can potentially be used for groundwater banking until a feasibility study is completed that concludes to the MID Board's satisfaction that a groundwater banking operation would benefit the water supplies of the District and Madera County and would have no significant adverse impact to landowners in the District or adjacent to the project.

We appreciate your support in this matter and look forward to working with you and your staff in the development of any legislation for federal funding of storage investigations in California. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (209) 673-3514.

Sincerely yours,

Steve

Stephen H. Ottemoeller
General Manager-Chief Engineer

cc   U. S. Senator Barbara Boxer
        U. S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
        U. S. Congressman Cal Dooley
        U. S. Congressman Gary Condit
        California Governor Pete Wilson
        California Secretary of State Bill Jones
        California Senator Dick Monteith
        California Senator Jim Costa
        California Assemblyman Dennis Cardoza
        California Assemblyman George House
        California Assemblyman Robert Prenter
        Michael Jackson, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Fresno
        Roger Patterson, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento
        Lester Snow, CALFED
        Jason Peltier, Central Valley Project Water Association
        Madera County Board of Supervisors
        Madera City Council
        Aliso Water District
        Chowchilla Water District
        Friant Water Users Authority
        Gravelly Ford Water District
        Michele Lasgoity
        John Mills, Regional Council or Rural Counties
        San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority

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